

Illinois Early Learning Council Governance

In 2011 and 2012 the Early Learning Council (ELC) went through a strategic planning process that resulted in restructuring the committees and further definition of the Executive Committee. The Council agreed to function under the governance structure outlined in 2007 during the transition process. This document outlines a proposed new governance structure for the ELC moving forward.

The ELC is a public-private partnership, as specified in the enabling legislation. As such, the Co-Chairs represent both the public and private sectors and Agency Liaisons are included in the committee leadership structure to ensure the public sector's close involvement in the work.

Role of the Early Learning Council

Mission: *The Illinois Early Learning Council coordinates existing programs and services for children from birth to five years of age in order to better meet the early learning needs of children and their families. The goal of the Council is to fulfill the vision of a statewide, high-quality, accessible, and comprehensive early learning system to benefit all young children whose parents choose it.*

(Source: The Illinois Early Learning Council Act P.A. 93-380, 20 ILCS 3933/5)

Membership: Per its authorizing legislation, the ELC comprises:

A leader of stature from the Governor's Office to serve as Co-Chairperson of the Council, Chief Administrator of the State Board of Education, Chief Administrator of the Department of Human Services, Chief Administrator of the Department of Children and Family Services, Chief Administrator of the Department of Public Health, Chief Administrator of the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Chief Administrator of the Board of Higher Education, and Chief Administrator the Illinois Community College Board.

One member appointed by each of the following: Speaker of the House of Representatives, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, President of the Senate, and Minority Leader of the Senate.

Governor Appointees – at least 10 (plus Co-Chair from Governor's Office) to include representation from early childhood care and development, representation from childcare, representation from child advocacy, representation from parenting support, representation from local community collaborations among early care, education programs and services, representation from maternal and child health, representation from children with special needs, representation from business, representation from labor, representation from law enforcement, and representative from Region V office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families.

Meetings:

- I. The ELC will meet at least three times per year as called by the ELC Co-Chairs.
- II. All Council meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act, therefore:
 - a. All agendas will be posted in advance, minutes will be taken and posted, and the meetings will be accessible to the public.
 - b. All formal actions will be noted on the agenda and will be distributed at least 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting.
 - c. A majority of a quorum (25% +1) needs to be present to vote in order for formal action to be taken.
 - i. Phone participants will have their votes counted.

Council Recommendation Approval Process

Early Learning Council:

- Review Executive Committee recommendations
- Vote to approve committee recommendations by a majority

Executive Committee:

- Review and provide feedback on committee recommendations
- Vote to approve committee recommendations by a majority
- Approved recommendations move to ELC for adoption

Committee:

- Review and provide feedback on subcommittee recommendations
- Approve subcommittee recommendations by a majority
- Approved recommendations move to Executive Committee for review and action

Subcommittee:

- Develop recommendation
- Present recommendation to committee

The Council provides direction and a unifying vision to committees and subcommittees

- III. The Council co-chairs will be responsible for transmitting the Council's recommendations to the appropriate parties in accordance with Council policy.

Executive Committee Role

Membership: The ELC's Executive Committee is comprised of: two ELC Co-Chairs, appointed by the Governor; two Co-Chairs and one state Agency Liaison from each of the five committees, appointed by the ELC Co-Chairs; and, at-large members, also appointed by the Council Co-Chairs.

Meetings:

- I. The Executive Committee will meet at least four times per year as called by the Council Co-Chairs.
- II. All Executive Committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act, therefore:
 - a. All agendas will be posted in advance, minutes will be taken and posted, and the meetings will be accessible to the public.
 - b. All formal actions will be noted on the agenda and will be distributed at least 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting.
 - c. A majority of a quorum (25% +1) needs to be present to vote in order for formal action to be taken.

- i. Phone participants will have their votes counted.

Charge:

1. Approve all formal recommendations from committees prior to their going to the ELC, following the accepted recommendation approval process.
2. Develop strategies for tracking implementation and approval of recommendations.
3. Review and track the progress of the ELC benchmarks.
4. Oversee and ensure committee work plan progress.
5. Review and ensure alignment of work and priorities with the ELC's guiding principles.
6. Ensure committee work plan progress and outcomes.
7. Integrate committee work to reduce duplication within the ELC and also reduce duplication with groups outside of the Council.
8. Develop an internal communications strategy that informs Council members, the committees, subcommittees, and the broader public on the ELC's work and accomplishments.
9. Provide input and support key initiatives such as KIDS and the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
10. Stay informed and take action when necessary on early childhood policy.
11. Advise on the major policy decisions concerning the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge.
12. Track the progress of the implementation of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge and the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Grant.
13. Approve the agenda for each meeting of the full Early Learning Council.

Expectations of Committees

Membership: In addition to the Executive Committee, the standing Committees of the ELC are: Data, Research & Evaluation; Program Standards & Quality; System Alignment & Integration; Family & Community Engagement; and, the Home Visiting Task Force. The Committee Co-Chairs recommend committee structure, with Executive Committee approval.

Meetings:

- I. The committees will meet at least three times per year.
- II. All committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act, therefore:
 - a. All agendas will be posted in advance, minutes will be taken and posted, and the meetings will be accessible to the public.
 - b. All formal actions will be noted on the agenda and will be distributed at least 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting.
 - c. A majority of a quorum (25% +1) needs to be present to vote in order for formal action to be taken.
 - i. Phone participants will have their votes counted.

Charge:

1. Identify a specific number of goals that can be realistically achieved over the next 2 years and/or on which significant progress could be made within 2-4 years.
2. Identify objectives under each goal that could be accomplished within the next 2 years and/or on which significant progress could be made within 2-4 years.
3. Identify key strategies (action steps) necessary to reach those objectives.
4. Develop 2-3 substantive recommendations for Council review each year.
5. Create ad hoc subcommittees as necessary to complete committee work.
6. Adjust work plans and priorities to reflect ELC priorities.
7. Determine the level of resources needed to achieve outlined objectives.
8. Make recommendations that encourage collaboration at the state and community level.

9. Identify and communicate membership expectations.
10. All committee meetings will comply with the Open Meetings Act¹.
11. All ELC Members are expected to participate in one standing committee.
12. Develop a communication strategy that informs Council members, the working groups, and the broader public of the ELC's work and accomplishments.
13. Provide written update on the committee's work prior to each Executive Committee and Council meeting.
14. Accomplish the work set out in the work plan.

Committee Co-Chair Responsibilities

Two committee co-chairs per ELC standing committee are appointed by the ELC Co-Chairs. The following tasks delineate general responsibilities for which the ELC committee co-chairs are responsible. Depending on the work of specific committees, co-chairs may assume additional responsibilities.

1. Convene and facilitate, at minimum, three Committee meetings.
2. Determine the need for content specific ad hoc subcommittees, with approval by the Council Co-Chairs and/or Executive Committee if time allows
3. Participate in determining and prioritizing achievable committee goals and action steps.
4. Ensure progress on the work plan and completion of recommendations.
5. Create a work plan in coordination with the committee staff person.
6. Create a structure that will allow for effective implementation of the work plan.
7. Review committee documents and materials with committee staff person.
8. Communicate with the staff person to ensure coordination of work activities and their forward movement.
9. Strive to have committee and workgroup members with diverse points of view and a membership representative of the state and expertise in the given content area.
10. Correspond with committee members and potential members.
11. Coordinate and create agendas and handouts in advance of meetings.
12. Review meeting notes and follow up as needed.
13. Bring committee recommendations to the Executive Committee and ELC.
14. Report committee information to the Executive Committee.
15. Monitor the work of all subcommittees and track progress to the work plan.
16. Coordinate closely with the other ELC committees to ensure alignment and prevent overlap.
17. Participate in all Executive Committee meetings.
18. Engage multiple types of stakeholders appropriately.
19. Provide updated work plan to the OECD and Council Co-Chairs quarterly.

Committee State Agency Liaison Responsibilities

One state Agency Liaison per ELC standing committee is appointed by the ELC Co-Chairs. The following tasks delineate general responsibilities for which the ELC Committee Agency Liaisons are responsible. Depending on the work of specific committees, Agency Liaisons may assume additional responsibilities.

1. Participate in all committee meetings.
2. Assist in facilitating meetings, at the request of the committee co-chairs.
3. Participate in determining and prioritizing achievable committee goals and action steps.
4. Ensure progress on the work plan and completion of recommendations.

¹ Open Meetings Act (OMA), 5 ILCS 120/1.01

5. Coordinate with the co-chairs and staff person to create the committee work plan and structure that will allow for effective work plan implementation.
6. Update the committee and co-chairs about changes in state policies, procedures, or operations that affect committee work.
7. Advise the committee co-chairs and committee of the feasibility of implementation of recommendations in the state system.
8. Coordinate closely with the other ELC committees and Agency Liaisons to ensure alignment, prevent overlap, and raise feasibility and implementation issues about committee recommendations related to other agencies, as pertinent.
9. Participate in all Executive Committee meetings.
10. Provide updated work plan to the OECD and Council Co-Chairs quarterly.

Committee Staffing Responsibilities

One staff person is assigned to each ELC committee. Staff persons are selected and assigned by the ELC Co-Chairs. The following tasks delineate general responsibilities for which the ELC committee staff persons are responsible. Depending on the work of specific committees, staff persons may assume additional responsibilities.

1. Develop and maintain committee work plans.
2. Conducting research/issue analysis for committee activities, and/or ensure coordination of research/work activities with committee members.
3. Develop any necessary materials for use in presenting the committee's work or recommendations to the Executive Committee and full Early Learning Council.
4. Attend all staffer meetings and be prepared to provide relevant updates.
5. Provide written update on the work of the committee no fewer than three work days prior to each Executive Committee and Council meeting.
6. Coordinate closely with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD).
7. Provide updated work plan to the OECD and Council Co-Chairs quarterly.
8. Provide OECD information and updates to co-chairs and Agency Liaisons.
9. Maintain member lists, contact information, and record of participation.
10. Schedule meetings and work to include all committee members.
11. Send all meeting correspondence in compliance with OMA² including meeting agendas and minutes.
12. Provide all of the necessary content to keep the OECD website up to date with committee's activities.
13. Work with co-chairs and Agency Liaison to prepare meeting agendas.
14. Create annotated agendas for co-chairs to use while facilitating meetings.
15. Review annotated agendas with co-chairs prior to committee meetings.
16. Take meeting minutes including time, date, and location of meeting as well as meeting participants by location.
17. Organize and archive committee files.
18. Coordinate and track the work of the subcommittees.
19. Coordinate with the other committee staff persons to ensure alignment and avoid duplication.

Committee and Subcommittee Member Responsibilities-Private Sector Members

1. Contribute to and participate in the committee and subcommittees, treating all other members,

² Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/1.01

- committee leadership and staff persons with respect and serving as a positive team member.
2. Carefully consider issues being addressed in committee meetings and work; offer best thinking, best practices, and solution oriented ideas to help move the work forward.
 3. Represent diverse points of view including representation from a variety of geographic regions, demographic groups, sectors, and content knowledge.
 4. Attend group meetings and calls.
 5. Prepare for meetings and calls by reviewing appropriate materials.
 6. Commit to necessary follow up.
 7. Meet established deadlines.
 8. Identify openly potential conflicts of interests, both real and perceived, between your role and the committee/subcommittee work, so other members are aware and can make good decisions accordingly.
 9. Be cognizant and respectful of the role of the public sector committee/subcommittee members, not expecting them to make decisions or commit resources for their agencies, but rather understanding the structure and decision making chain each must go through to get their work and committee/subcommittee recommendations accomplished.
 10. Respect the communications process established by the Council and state agencies, and not share prematurely any information that is discussed at the committee meetings.

Committee and Sub-Committee Member Responsibilities – Public Sector Members

Public sector members have a unique role and so, in addition to most of the first eight responsibilities delineated for private sector members above (items 4-9 below), the following responsibilities also apply to them.

1. Be cognizant and respectful of the role of the private sector committee/subcommittee members, including the expertise and advocacy they bring to the work.
2. Be mindful of your role as a public sector partner, recognizing that you cannot speak for the agency nor commit decisions or resources without moving issues and recommendations through the appropriate channels in your agency.
3. Work with other public sector members to bring an integrated and solution-oriented view to the work of the committee/subcommittee.
4. Contribute to and participate in the committee and subcommittees, treating all other members, committee leadership and staff persons with respect and serving as a positive team member.
5. Carefully consider issues being addressed in committee meetings and work; offer best thinking, best practices, and solution oriented ideas to help move the work forward.
6. Attend group meetings and calls.
7. Prepare for meetings and calls by reviewing appropriate materials.
8. Commit to necessary follow up.
9. Meet established deadlines.